

Brown's Bank Note.

It was the height of the season and Yarborough was full of visitors. The tide was rippling shoreward over the silvery sands and defiant children, standing on the highest turret of their mimic castles, jumped down and ran backwards to escape the rush of the incoming waves. Above high-water mark indolent mannanas lolled lazily in their canvas chairs, and in their waking moments shouted reproof and warning to the venturesome offspring. The shout of the boatmen mingled with the music of bands, and gay good humor rested upon the ruddy faces of the holiday-makers who lined the parade, or gathered in groups to listen to the coon songs and hoary chestnuts of the nigger minstrels.

In the comfortable smoke-room of the Queen's Hotel half a dozen guests sat talking by the open window. The talk had drifted from trade to politics, from politics to the coronation, and then, by easy stages, to crime and criminals. Several detective stories had been told with varying success; then one, told by a quiet, gentlemanly fellow named Lawson, started a discussion concerning the confidence trick.

"It passes my comprehension how people can be taken in so easily," said one of them. "The trick has been exposed so often you would think every child in the country had heard of it, and yet scarcely a week passes without someone being fooled by it. Serve the beggars right. I say. Such fools ought not to be trusted with money. I should like to see the man who could victimize me! He would be quite welcome to all he got."

"There is no fear of anyone trying it on you, Brown," said Malcolm; "you never have enough money to make it worth their while."

"Oh! haven't I? That's all you know about it," retorted Brown, angrily. "I should be as plump a pigeon as you, anyhow. The man who plucked me might get anything up to sixty quid for his trouble. But I am not that kind of fool who is soon parted from his money. I'm too cute to be taken in by the confidence trick."

"For my part I think the victim is more to be pitied than blamed," said Lawson. "When all is said and done, confidence is as necessary to life as the air we breathe. It is the keystone to our commercial and social systems. Without it trade would be paralyzed and friendship impossible. We each of us exercise it in our every action. By sitting at this window we show our confidence in the builder. By eating the food set before us we express our confidence in the cook. When—"

"That is a different matter altogether," interrupted Brown, testily. "In ordinary business and in social life a man must take his chance of being imposed upon. But only a born idiot would be taken in by a palpable trick."

"If he knew it was a trick," said Lawson. "But the criminal does not spread his snare in sight of his victim. He is a keen observer, and varies his methods according to the character of the individual. And if you will excuse my saying so, Brown, I think your everweening conceit and love of display would make you an easy victim."

"You'd better try it, then," said Brown, hotly.

"I am no criminal," answered Lawson, quietly. "If I were I should ask no easier victim."

In the silence which followed Brown rose from his seat and left the room, slamming the door behind him noisily as he went.

"I am glad you shut him up," said Malcolm, as the door closed behind Brown. "He is insufferable. I wish to goodness someone would take a rise out of him."

"So do I," said Rayburn. "Couldn't we manage it somehow? His smartness is undeniable, but when he boasts of it I always feel as if I want to kick him."

Lawson listened in silence while they discussed several schemes for Brown's undoing. All were unwieldy and none of them practical. Suddenly his eyes twinkled merrily and he laughed softly. The others turned and looked at him.

"If you play him at all it must be by means of the confidence trick," he said, quietly. "That will touch him on the raw, and put an effective stopper on his boasting."

"We should never manage it," said Malcolm, dubiously.

"Not with the old trick, that—as he says—is too palpable. But a new version might succeed; in fact, I'm sure it would. If you five are willing to subscribe a ten-pound note each towards a fifty-pound note, I'll work it for you. Of course, the note will come back to you again; but I want it to play him with. I'll tell you the plan in my mind, and leave you to judge as to its feasibility."

The simplicity of Lawson's plan ensured its success, and as they were all keen on humiliating Brown, they readily agreed to it.

The co-operation of a friend of Lawson's—Detective Inspector Jarvis, of Scotland Yard—who was staying at the Star Hotel, was essential to the success of the scheme, so they went in a body and interviewed him.

At first the inspector refused to entertain their suggestion.

"When Brown finds that he has been fooled he may turn nasty," he said. "He cannot harm you fellows, but if he reported me to the authorities, I should get into no end of a row. And I cannot run the risk of being censured in order that you may fool him."

They assured him that though bumptious Brown was not malicious.

"You have nothing to fear from him," said Rayburn. "He is a true sport, and knows how to take a beating. And so the inspector agreed to help them."

They were in high glee over their success, and greeted Brown effusively on his return to the hotel. Lawson apologized for his rudeness and asked him to make one of his party to Norrich the following day.

"We go by train and return by boat," he explained. "I pay all expenses and stand you a luncheon at the Criterion."

Brown accepted the invitation, and early the following morning they left Yarborough for Norrich.

They visited the castle and the cathedral, spent a pleasant hour in the pretty little village of Craupe, then drove to the Criterion and did justice to the tasty luncheon Lawson had ordered.

When the waiter brought in the bill Lawson handed him a fifty-pound note. A moment afterwards the landlord entered the room and regretted his inability to change it, but if they could wait he would send round to the bank.

"I fear we have not time," said Rayburn, glancing at his watch. "It will take us all our time to reach the boat."

Brown offered to settle the bill, but Lawson would not allow him to do so.

"But if you could change the note for me?"

Glad of an opportunity to display his wealth, Brown counted out the change; then thrust the note carelessly into his waistcoat pocket, and they set out for the wharf.

On the Bank Plain Lawson went into the postoffice, while the others sauntered slowly to the boat. The captain waited several minutes after the time of starting, then, as Lawson did not put in an appearance, cast off.

Just as the boat got fairly underway Lawson came hurrying across the bridge. They waved their hats and cheered ironically and, with a gesture of disappointment, he turned and walked towards the railway station.

"You fellows ought to have taken my advice and waited for him," said Brown, indignantly. "He will think we are a mean lot leaving him behind in that fashion."

"Oh, that's all right," said Rayburn. "He told me not to wait. He will be on the quay when we reach Yarborough."

When the boat reached Yarborough Lawson was not on the quay to meet them. But as Brown stepped on to the wharf a burly-looking, middle-aged man, with "official" writ large all over him, came forward and asked to have a word with him. As soon as they reached the outskirts of the crowd the stranger handed Brown his card. He glanced at it, and read: "Detective Inspector Jarvis, Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard."

Brown looked at the inspector anxiously.

"You need not be alarmed, Mr. Brown," said the inspector, cheerily. "I only want a little information from you. You—"

Lawson and changed a fifty-pound note for him, I believe?"

Brown nodded.

"Will you let me look at the note?"

Brown took the note from his pocket and handed it to him. The inspector looked at it carefully, then compared it with a list in his hand.

"I thought so," he said briskly. "Is it a counterfeit?" Brown asked, anxiously.

"Oh, no; the note is good enough, but it is one of a number stolen from Barr's bank by a person named Grant. This is a list of the numbers; you can see for yourself that the note is one of them."

While Brown compared the numbers the inspector continued: "We know Lawson was implicated in the robbery, and I have been hunting him for several days, but it was not until last night that I got wind of his hiding place. When I arrived here this morning the hotel people told me he had gone to Norrich. I followed him there, and arrested him at the railway station this afternoon."

"Although a clever and dangerous criminal, Lawson is not a bad fellow at heart, and in order to save you from being mixed up in the robbery he told me the circumstances under which you changed the note for him. I went to the Criterion and verified his story, then caught the five train here."

The inspector folded the note and placed it in his pocket-book. Brown looked at him anxiously.

"Here, I say, you don't mean to—"

"Don't distress yourself, Mr. Brown," interrupted the inspector. "I must keep the note, but you will suffer no loss, or very little, at any rate. The change taken from Lawson's pocket—£49 13s. 6d.—is yours, and will be handed over to you; but you will have to accompany me to Norrich in order to receive it. If we hurry we shall catch the 7.30."

The cloud that had settled upon Brown's face vanished before this cheering assurance.

"I suppose you fellows don't feel like coming back to Norrich with us?" he said, to his companions, who had listened eagerly to the inspector's story.

"No, I don't see that we could help you in any way," said Rayburn, answering for the remainder.

"All right. I'll see you at the hotel when I get back," said Brown, as he turned and hurried with the inspector to the railway station.

Just before the train started a porter opened the carriage door and asked: "Anyone here named Jarvis?"

"That is my name," answered the inspector. "Why?"

"Telegram for you, sir."

The inspector took the buff-colored envelope and opened it. As he read the message his eyes sparkled brightly. Without speaking he handed the wire to Brown. It read: "Go Teccles immediately. Grant staying at Albion. Keep note, but give Brown this telegram as proof of his identity.—Finch."

While Brown was reading the telegram the inspector jumped on to the platform and the train got slowly into motion.

"You'll be all right, Mr. Brown," he said, walking beside the train. "Finch, the chief constable, will hand you the money. Good-bye."

Brown wished him "luck," then settled himself in the corner of the carriage, and the inspector turned and left the station. On the bridge he met Rayburn and his companions.

"How did he take it?" they asked, eagerly.

"Like a lamb," laughed the inspector, as he took out his pocket-book and handed Rayburn the fifty-pound note. "I should like to see his face when Lawson meets him at the other end. Which way are you going?"

"Not particular," said Malcolm, as they turned and walked along the quay in the direction of the town hall.

The inspector proved to be an entertaining companion, and the five friends spent a very pleasant hour with him. It was the first time they had come in contact with a real detective, and the detective, glad of an appreciative audience, related some of his most thrilling experiences.

"I must be off now," he said, about nine o'clock. "See you again in the morning. Tell Lawson I will call about ten. Fine fellow, Lawson. Never met his equal for making friends. Gets on well with everybody. High and low, rich and poor, they all like Lawson. What time are they coming back from Norrich?"

"By the last train. We are all going down to the station to meet them."

"I suppose he wanted plenty of time to smooth Brown over. Well, he'll manage it if any living man can. So long."

"Fine fellow," said Leek, as they watched the inspector down the street; "but a blind man could see he is a detective."

"I was just thinking so myself," said Simons. "He seems to have policeman stamped all over him. What are we going to do till train time?"

"Let us go into the Steam-packet and play cork pool," suggested Rayburn, and the others fell in with his suggestion.

They played pool until closing time, then walked down to the station. When the last train from Norrich arrived Brown and Lawson were not among the passengers who alighted.

"They must have caught an earlier train," said Malcolm; "we shall find them at the hotel waiting for us."

The hotel was in darkness, but as they were going upstairs the manager came out of his office.

"Are Brown and Lawson in bed?" asked Malcolm.

"In bed?" queried the manager; "no—they've gone."

"Gone!" they chorused. "Gone where?"

"To London, I suppose. Mr. Lawson settled their bill last night, and a porter called for their luggage before you left this morning. I thought you were all going down to the station to see them off."

The five friends looked at each other in blank astonishment.

"Were they here together?" asked Rayburn.

"Yes; didn't you know that?"

"No, I'm hanged if we did! We thought they were complete strangers to each other," said Malcolm as they turned and walked upstairs.

On the landing they stopped and discussed the unexpected development.

"It is no use puzzling our brains over the matter," said Malcolm at length. "It is a mystery which only Lawson could solve. My idea is that, being pals with Brown, he did not like to bring him back here to face our ridicule. Well, we have had a good day, anyhow! I wonder what the inspector will say? Good-night, you fellows."

When the inspector did not keep his appointment the next morning they concluded he must have heard from Lawson, and set out for the Star to learn what explanation he had given him. As they passed the bank Rayburn went in to change the note. A moment afterwards he came out breathless with excitement.

"It is us and not Brown who have been had," he panted.

"What do you mean?" they asked, sharply.

"The note's a counterfeit!"

"Then so is the inspector," said Malcolm. "It's no use our going to the Star, for we won't find him there."—London Tit-Bits.

MADE THE JOURNEY ALONE

THE PEOPLE ARE NOW PROTECTED IN TROPICAL AFRICA.

No One Was Killed to Accompany the King Into the Other World.

It has been a crime punishable with death for years past to kill slaves in the territory of the Congo Free State upon the demise of a great person. This had been the custom because it was thought necessary that he should have plenty of company on his journey into the other world. Kings and chiefs and other important persons now have to make the journey alone. This law is being strictly enforced, as far as the authority of the State extends; and so the practice of human sacrifices is gradually being wiped out.

It was a horrible evil, and the fact that the whites are insisting upon its abolition is a blessing to Africa. European influence is not always for the good of Africans, but the war the whites are waging with some of the hideous facts of barbarism, such as human sacrifices, cannibalism, fetishism and slave raiding, foot up a large balance in favor of the Caucasian in his account with Africa.

The British are following the example of the Congo State in dealing sternly with these evils. A recent instance, to which a Roman Catholic missionary has called attention, is very interesting as showing the potent influences for the protection of the people that are getting a firm foothold in the heart of tropical Africa.

In 1899 the Government of the British was established over the large country of Ubemba which extends between Lakes Tanganyika and Bangweolo. One of the most powerful chiefs of the tribe was Mwamba, who lorded it over a large district near Bangweolo. He was finally

GATHERED TO HIS FATHERS;

and the trouble the ruling family have been put to in the matter of his burial is regarded as important in the history of his country, for it is believed to mark the end of one of the savage customs that have been depopulating that country.

Mwamba had been dead for fourteen months, but he was not yet buried. His friends kept his body above ground all this time in the hope that they would finally soften the obdurate hearts of the British, who for some undoubtedly bad reason were opposed to permitting the dead ruler to enter the next world with an escort befitting his importance. For Mwamba was a really good monarch. He had been a tyrant whose name was a terror. He had mutilated a great number of his subjects. His crimes were more numerous than the hairs of his head. It was not reasonable to let him go into the other world without an escort worthy of his rank in the world from which he had departed.

From time immemorial in that country the graves of defunct chiefs had been the scenes of veritable butcheries. It was the custom to drag the victims to the tomb of the late important personage; each one of them received on the head a single terrible blow from an ax or club. If the victim succumbed, as was almost invariably the case, this was a sure sign that his or her presence was agreeable to the dead person. If he survived, this showed clearly that his room was preferred to his company and he was allowed to get well and

THANK HIS LUCKY STARS.

The British were on the ground keeping a careful lookout to see that no one should lose his life simply because Mwamba had died. Members of the ruling family repeatedly went to the white men and reasoned with them. Mwamba certainly needed women to cook his food in the other world. He required slaves to brush away importunate flies and wives to offer him the tribute of their adulation. In fact, everybody who had been connected with his court should be immolated on his tomb or buried alive in his grave. Surely the white men would not punish the petitioners for following the custom of the country or paying due honor to the dead. But the stern white men were unyielding. "If you kill a single person," they said, "on account of the death of Mwamba, you will pay the penalty with your lives."

One of these visits to the British occurred ten months after the death of the chief.

"Well," said the white men, "have you buried your chief yet?"

"How can we bury him when you will not permit us to give him any companions? If we should bury Mwamba simply as an ordinary mortal he would avenge himself upon us and bring terrible calamities upon the country."

They were informed again that if any effort was made to provide Mwamba with an escort they would form a part of it. Fourteen months passed and the body was still wrapped in cloth awaiting interment. A deputation was sent to the British to make

A LAST APPEAL.

"Mwamba, our chief, has now been dead many months and his body is not yet buried. We beg of you to let us bury with him at least a few slaves."

"No."

"Then, at least, just a few of his women."

"Not a man or a woman."

"Well, then, a little child."

"No, no, and once again, no."

There was nothing to be hoped for from the inflexible British. About the same time the report began to spread among the people that the chief would be very well content to make the journey into the other world alone. The body was buried without the usual sacrifice, to the great satisfaction of the majority of the people, but to the profound humiliation of the ruling family.

Some hundreds of lives were saved by the determination to prevent this butchery on the grave of the dead man.

THE LARGEST HARVESTER

It Is Self-Moving, and Cuts a 36-Foot Swath.

What is said to be the largest automobile in the world, and the largest combined harvester, as well, is now at work on a big ranch in Central California, where it is being used in cutting 40,000 acres of barley. The big machine consists of a traction engine, capable of handling seventy-five tons, and which takes the place of sixty horses, a header or mowing machine, which cuts a swath thirty-six feet, and a threshing machine all complete. The threshing machine and header are run by a thirty horse power engine, entirely separate from the traction machine, save that they both get steam from the same boiler.

The apparatus moves over the ground at different speeds, according to the thickness of the crop, while all the time the header and thresher are going at full speed, whether the grain be thick or thin. The average speed made is three and a half miles an hour, and 100 acres a day can be threshed by the machine.

The drive wheels of this monster traction engine are eight feet in diameter and have tires forty-eight inches wide, on which are ridges an inch and a half high. Eight men are employed on the thresher. Half a minute after the header starts to work the threshed grain begins to fall into the sacks on the other side from where it is cut, while the straw falls into a cart behind. The heads are carried away from the header by a draper, or moving belt, forty-eight inches wide. They are carried through a colander, which breaks the beard from the barley and shells it at the same time, then by a narrow belt through two cleaners and finally to a bin, from which it is sacked. The sacks are sewed and set aside as fast as filled. When twelve sacks have been filled they are allowed to slide off the cart on which they are stacked to the ground. Likewise when the straw cart is full it is dumped.

This giant automobile is sixty-six feet long and half as wide, weighing over a hundred tons. It uses oil as fuel, necessitating the use of four horses to haul oil and the water for the boiler as it travels around large areas.

APPROPRIATE.

"Your majesty," said the cook of the king of the cannibal islands, "how will you have the latest captive prepared?"

"I always like to cook my game in some way appropriate to their national characteristics," replied the king. "Of what nation is the captive?"

"He is an Irishman, your majesty. Is it your pleasure that he be done into an Irish stew?"

"Oh, no. You may make soup of him."

"But is that characteristic of the Irish, your majesty?" asked the chef politely.

"Certainly it is. That is the way they cook young men themselves in Ireland."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I never heard of it."

"That, my dear sir, is because you have not had so much time to read as I have. I, sir, have often met, in my reading about Irishmen, with the expression, 'a broth of a boy.'"

LIGHTING TRAINS.

The State railway administration in Prussia has just settled upon a system of electric lighting for trains which is attracting much attention in Germany. The axle-driven dynamo having been found objectionable because it borrows too much power from the locomotive, and the system of storage batteries being undesirable for other reasons, the plan adopted is to place on the locomotive a steam-driven dynamo, which supplies a current to a small regulating battery in each car. Thus every car in a vestibuled train has a separate lighting system fed from its own accumulator, although the general supply comes from the generator on the locomotive. Each car is provided with ceiling lamps and reading lamps.

LET TO FOUR TENANTS.

There was a nice muddle at Patrick, Scotland, recently. By some blunder a house was let to four different incoming tenants, and all the four fittings arrived together. One of the tenants came from a considerable distance. There was a great rushing to and fro on the part of the factor, and houses were got for three of the tenants, the too-much-let house having been left to the far-traveled flitter as a sort of park of sympathy.